

NCLB
Committee of Practitioners
Casa Grande Middle School Board Room
300 W. McMurray Blvd.
Casa Grande, AZ 85222
March 7, 2003

Meeting Minutes

Attendees

COP MEMBERS

Julia Ayres
Christine Bejarano
Pamela Bergstrom
Marge Carrithers
Steve Chambers
Karen Copley
Kaye Dean
Analizabeth Doan
Shelly Duran
Robert Edgar
Tonya Ford
Tim Frey

Lannie Gillespie
Maureen Irr
Bob Klee
Barbara Kilian
Lois Lamar
Jean Lewis
Norma Malamud
Patricia Marsh
Mary McIntyre
Alejandro Perez
Gail Powell
Lynn Thompson

ADE

Catherine Hintze
Joyce Hunter
Nancy Konitzer
Carrie Larson
Laurie Larson
Nancy Stahl
Mary Whitney

GUESTS

Julie Barncastle
Dene Wallace
Dave Spellman
(for Diane Fox)

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Kaye Dean opened the meeting at 9:03 am. It was moved and seconded to accept the 1/10/03 meeting minutes as amended to add Tonya Ford as an attendee. The motion passed unanimously. A question arose from the Effective Practices committee members regarding how to find a list of approved, research-based reading program components. They have discovered that many published reading program products lack some of the five required components and most have only 3 of the 5, resulting in a need to fill in the missing areas. That discussion was deferred in light of the information already scheduled for presentation.

ADE UPDATE – Nancy Stahl

Nancy Stahl gave the COP members an update regarding recent changes at ADE. Ralph Romero, Deputy Associate Superintendent for the Academic Support Division, underwent triple bypass heart surgery in February and is resting comfortably at home. In his absence, Julie Gasaway, former Associate Superintendent, has returned as Acting Director of ASD. Carrie Larson, Marion Herrera and Nancy Stahl are continuing as Acting Managers for three ASD units. Mary Whitney and Catherine Hintze were introduced as new EAS and Title I staff members, respectively.

NCLB Final Plan & Accountability System UPDATE -- Nancy Konitzer

Nancy Konitzer addressed some issues regarding the implementation of NCLB. First, the federal peer review of our accountability system took place on March 3. The peer review team made their recommendations and the ADE will modify the plan and then submit it to USDE by May 1, 2003.

Second, a decision was made by the ADE to delay the deadline for Final NCLB Consolidated Plan submission from June 30 to December 31, 2003. By May 15, the Final Plan template should be up on the ADE website and LEA training on the final plan will be provided in June and August. Third, LEA eligibility for FY04 NCLB funding will be based on the existence of an approved Interim LEA Consolidated Plan.

Fourth, the USDE review team will arrive in May to monitor the ADE only on Title I and a monitoring letter will be signed by Julie Gasaway and sent to the LEAs selected for on-site visits along with a 13-page protocol document to allow the LEAs to prepare their documentation for the visits. In response to a question about how long to keep documentation, Nancy advised retention for at least 3 years, keeping IASA materials in one file while putting NCLB records in a new file.

NEW ASD WEB PAGE PRESENTATION – Laurie Larson

Laurie Larson provided a handout on the new ASD web page that will be part of the newly designed ADE website going online March 15. She detailed the new, user-friendly features, such as four different ways to find ADE employees (by name, organization chart, ADE division and services provided). A motion was made and seconded to endorse the new ASD web page as presented and urge its immediate implementation. The motion passed unanimously and Laurie was commended by all for her excellent work, which includes a COP “button” to replace the “seven step process” currently needed to find the COP section and meeting minutes on the web.

SCIENTIFICALLY BASED RESEARCH (SBR) ISSUES – Nancy Stahl

Nancy Stahl spoke about the Scientifically Based Research Workshop held in Denver by the National Clearinghouse that she and Carrie Larson attended on Feb. 12, 2003. This workshop was jam-packed with information and held from 8 to 5, with just an hour for lunch. It was comprised of only 5 state people and 11 national practitioners there for training in providing technical assistance on scientifically based research.

This effort was related to the working group that Ildi Laczko-Kerr spoke about at the January meeting, which she participated in, along with folks from NCCSR, WestEd and several other state departments to put together a workshop for practitioners defining scientifically based research (SBR). Their work has been specifically targeted to schools engaged in Comprehensive School Reform; however, it would be valuable to any school going through the school improvement process.

The workshop that COP members requested at the January meeting will be held on May 8 at the Alhambra District in conjunction with the May 9 COP meeting already scheduled. The workshop will consist of an overview of basic research principals and a step-by-step process schools can use to evaluate any research report against the “gold-standard” of SBR. Materials that participants can take home for reference will be provided as well. Two websites that are excellent resources were discussed. The USDE “What Works Clearinghouse” at www.whatworks.org and the National Center for Comprehensive School Reform (NCCSR) at www.goodschools.gwu.edu.

SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT GRANTS/External Facilitators– Carrie Larson

NCLB, under Section 1003, requires states to set aside funds to be allocated to schools for School Improvement. Arizona has approximately \$3.2 million to allocate to low-performing schools this year. The grant is similar to the Title I Accountability grant, however, instead of focusing on the school improvement planning process, the focus will be on implementation of the school improvement plan.

Pending State Board approval, 114 Title I schools are eligible for grants based on being in either their **first or second year** of school improvement **and** receiving an **Underperforming** label on their 2002 Achievement Profile. Sixty-six schools are in their second year while 48 are in their first year of school improvement.

April 18 is the application deadline and the basic grant award is \$30,000. However, schools may be eligible for increased funding based on two additional criteria: **priority status** and **location**. **Priority Status** schools are in their 2nd year of improvement **and** received an Underperforming label on their 2002 Achievement Profile. An additional \$7,500 is available to assist 66 Priority Status schools that will be identified for Corrective Action if their next Profile results in another Underperforming label. Schools that are **located outside of either Maricopa or Pima counties** are considered **rural schools** and are eligible for an additional \$5,000 whether or not they have Priority Status.

Schools that receive a School Improvement Grant also will be eligible to apply for a Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Grant in summer or early fall of 2003. Cycle IIA schools and those that missed CSR grants the first time also are eligible to apply. Fifty schools will be selected for grants of at least \$50,000. Continuation for 2 additional years will be determined by federal reauthorization of Title I. Schools already on 3-year CSR grants will continue to receive their second and third year funding. Each year of funding can be used up to 27 months from receipt of funds, if grant requirements are met. **Note** that the **NCLB does not require the ADE to approve School Improvement Plans**.

External Facilitators

The ADE-approved External Facilitator (EF) system was revamped recently based on research conducted for the ADE by RMC Research of Colorado. Schools turned in evaluations of the performance of their EFs and RMC interviewed EFs and school principals to highlight strengths and weaknesses in the EF program. As a result the application packet was changed to require a resume’ plus 2 letters of recommendation and 2 to 3 ADE evaluation forms completed by school or LEA officials. All existing

External Facilitators were required to reapply, along with new applicants, by the Feb. 14, 2003, deadline. Additional application cycles were set for March and April so that a larger number of candidates could be included.

External Facilitators selected in each round must attend four ADE-sponsored trainings. In addition, EFs must spend a minimum of 60 hours physically at the school site during a five-month period. To reflect the focus on plan implementation, EFs duties were changed. EFs are required to analyze the school improvement plan and make recommendations to strengthen it, if needed, prior to assisting the school in plan implementation. EFs continue to monitor the school's progress toward achieving stated benchmarks and goals and to suggest strategies for revisions or corrections, as necessary. EFs also must evaluate the school leadership, especially the principal, because the school administration can be an obstacle to school improvement and evaluation should come from the outside, i.e., EFs are sometimes looked at as the bad guys –“those people who tell us what to do,” putting them in a better position to make criticisms than the school improvement teams.

PARAPROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS – Nancy Konitzer

Educational Testing Service (ETS) developed the **ParaPro Assessment** in response to *No Child Left Behind* (NCLB) requirements that beginning January 8, 2002, instructional paraprofessionals are required to have one of the following:

- An associate of arts degree
- Two years of college
- Demonstrated, through a state or local academic assessment, knowledge of, and the ability to assist in the instruction of reading, writing, and math

The Jan. 8, 2003, Arizona pilot administration of this paraprofessional qualifications test had a possible score of 480 points. A statewide committee of 12 met recently and set the qualifying or “cut” score for Arizona at 459, a score that represents getting about 75% of the answers correct. Four out of 5 Arizona participants qualified. This is a new test so the validity data are thin, but similar qualifying scores ranging from 461 to 455 were set in the ten other states that have approved this test.

While this ETS test has been reviewed and approved by the ADE; it is not the only test option. Other companies beside ETS may participate and districts may develop their own tests, all subject to an ADE review to gain state approval.

Santa Cruz Valley Unified District has an online testing option and any district can apply to be designated as a testing site. Districts should be cautioned not to pay for a non-employee to take the test as it would be considered a gift of public funds and, therefore, illegal. Title I or II funds may be used for employee testing, however. Registration is done online and complete information is available at www.ets.org/parapro.

Nancy Konitzer closed by pointing out some additional areas of concern:

- An Arizona definition of “highly qualified” in regard to teachers under NCLB has not been set,
- Christy Farley, Executive Director of the State Board, is studying the scope of the problem of aligning certification rules with NCLB requirements prior to inviting educators and community members to participate,
- The NCS teacher testing contract expires on June 30, 2003, and
- NCLB requirement now in effect for hiring only highly qualified teachers for Title I classrooms could prevent some schools from going Schoolwide.

AYP/ACCOUNTABILITY UPDATE – Carrie Larson

The USDE peer review of our Accountability Workbook went well according to Ilde Laczko-Kerr, ADE Research and Policy Director. The Exit Interview provided the following strengths, weaknesses and recommendations that will be included in a formal letter of findings sent to Supt. Horne.

Strengths included a commitment to include all stakeholders in the creation of AZ LEARNS and to listen to concerns/input of schools and districts; proactive stance to include all grade levels in AIMS with articulation of the Arizona Academic Standards to particular grades instead of grade spans; and inclusion of two technical advisory groups.

Misalignments included lack of SES and other disaggregated data at the student level; lack of system to evaluate K-2 and new schools (3-year rolling average needed); and problem with out-of-level testing used for Special Education students contrary to federal law.

Recommendations made by the federal review panel for revisions prior to the final May 1, 2003, deadline included:

- Analyze impact data,
- Audit our system for data verification of self-reported information, and
- Add Rewards under AZ LEARNS, now we have only Sanctions.

SUPPLEMENTAL SERVICES – Carrie Larson

Discussion began with some problems with individual vendors and a lack of coverage for K-5 in rural areas. Three rounds have been held for supplemental services providers to apply to be accepted for the state-approved list. More rounds will be added as needed to improve coverage statewide. A complaint procedure is under development and three

written complaints have been received to date. Tim Frey will share the parent/service provider agreement he developed as a sample for other districts.

Set-asides that exceeded the amount needed for payment of transportation and/or supplemental services may be reallocated by the district after October or whenever the deadline set by the district for parents to choose a different school or request supplemental services for their children has passed (could be as late as Nov./Dec.).

USDE MONITORING UPDATE – Nancy Stahl

The USDE Monitors will be reviewing only the Title I, Part A programs at the ADE from May 13 –15, 2003. Schools to be visited will include 2 in school improvement, 2 outstanding and 2 with high poverty enrollment. The Exit Interview will be held on May 16 and, hopefully, some answers to our key questions will be forthcoming from the monitors along with their findings.

Kaye Dean went over possible agenda items for the May 9 COP meeting that will include the SBR Workshop on May 8, both at the Alhambra Elementary District Office. Clarification was made that election of officers will be done at the first FY 2004 meeting.

Adjournment at 1:45 pm.